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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE  
AND CIVIL SERVICE

January 2, 1958

Professor Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Professor Lederberg:

I am very happy that I could comply with your request for the 1956 and 1957 USDA Yearbooks. I am sending them to you under separate cover.

You were mighty thoughtful to add such a helpful postscript. This kind of criticism I know is hard to write and I do appreciate it. In general I would agree with your criticism of my paying for my European trip. I do think however, that in these circumstances the situation was entirely different than the usual situation. Under the circumstances the decision was difficult, but I am convinced that I made the right one. You see, I was not sent to Europe on official Congressional business. I was invited by the West German government to be their guest. On my own volition, and entirely on my own volition, I decided that I would go to Poland, and to Norway before I returned to Washington. In view of the fact that my travel was not authorized by the Federal government in any part, I felt it was necessary for me to pay for my trip to Poland and Norway.

The decision on the trip to Germany and back was not so easy. Since the West German government is likely to be the recipient of at least some kinds of assistance from the United States Congress, I felt I would be in the strongest and most independent and objective position in deciding on German assistance if I were under no possible conceivable obligation to that government.

Incidentally, it is hard for me to conceive of any colleague who would be less able to afford the trip than would I. It is true that I borrowed the money. On the other hand, I have already repaid it. I just finished one extremely expensive campaign for which I still owe money. I am about to embark on another extremely expensive campaign. I am sure I will need money and need it urgently.

Professor J. Lederberg  
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I would feel that it is a good principle for Senators and Congressmen to ask themselves in each and every case whether or not they should pay for their trip. I think it is a moral question which they might answer some times positively and sometimes negatively. It is never an easy decision, but I think that the answer should always be made in the best interests of the taxpayer.

Thanks again for your mighty helpful letter.

Sincerely,

  
William Proxmire, U.S. S.

WP/nm

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